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ST. REGIS SEMINARY

I

Early in 1823 Louis Valentine William Du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana, visited Washington with a view to obtain a government subsidy for the support of a few missionaries whom he intended to settle among the Indian tribes of his vastly extended diocese. He was successful to the extent that he was guaranteed by the Government through the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, an annual appropriation of \$800 for the maintenance of four missionaries and also a contribution of unspecified amount toward the erection of a building in which to house them.¹

With a characteristic touch, perhaps, of the enthusiastic formulation of plans coupled with rather faint appreciation of the practical difficulties that might be expected to attend their execution, that appeared at times in his conduct of ecclesiastical affairs, Bishop Du Bourg, even while he thus negotiated with the Government, knew not from what quarter he was to obtain the necessary priests for his projected Indian missions.² But in this instance his simple confidence was amply justified of Providence. He had just succeeded in his efforts to obtain from the Government a subsidy for the support of Indian missionaries who were to come from he knew not where, when presently a situation was disclosed that solved the problem before him in the happiest and most unexpected manner. The Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Whitemarsh in Maryland was on the point of being closed on account of lack of material means to insure its support. Bishop Du Bourg, being advised of this critical state of affairs, proposed a transfer of the entire personnel of the Novitiate to his diocese, with the design of realizing

NOTE: The letters and documents embodied in this article are, with a few exceptions, hitherto unpublished material from the archives of the New York-Maryland and Missouri Provinces of the Society of Jesus and the files of the Indian Bureau in Washington. In the citation of letters in the footnotes, the particles "to," "à," or "ad," connecting the names of writer and addressee, are used to indicate that the originals of the letters are in English, French, or Latin respectively.

¹ Calhoun to Dubourg, Feb. 20, 1823; March 11, 1823.

² Du Bourg à M. Louis Du Bourg, March 17, 1823. Published in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1: 462 (Louvain ed., 1825).

through their agency his program of missionary enterprise among the Indians of the West. The conditions of the transfer were satisfactorily arranged between the prelate and Rev. Charles Neale, Superior of the Jesuit Mission of Maryland, and a Concordat regulating the respective rights and obligations of the Society of Jesus in Missouri and the Bishop of Louisiana was drawn up and solemnly signed by the two contracting parties at Georgetown College, March 19, 1823. A week later Bishop Du Bourg signed a bond conveying to the Jesuits, to serve as a home for the latter, a property of his of about 205 acres situated in the environs of St. Ferdinand or Florissant, a quaint old Creole village lying about fifteen miles to the northwest of St. Louis in Missouri.³

As the Jesuit novices would not be ready to take the field as missionaries until after a period of further training and preparation, the Bishop saw himself compelled to modify somewhat the plan he had originally laid before the Government. He now, for the first time, it would appear, conceived the idea of an Indian School to be financed with the Government appropriation he had personally solicited and obtained in behalf of subjects of his who were to engage in resident missionary labor among the native tribes. "Pending the ordination of our Jesuit novices and their going forth as apostles," he wrote to his brother, M. Louis Du Bourg of Bordeaux, March 17, two days before the signing of the Concordat,

I propose to receive into the Seminary a half-dozen Indian children from different tribes, so as to begin to familiarize my young missionaries with their manners and languages and in turn prepare the children to become guides, interpreters and helpers to the missionaries when the time comes to send the latter forth to the scattered tribes.⁴

On the same day that he penned the preceding, Du Bourg communicated his change of plan to Secretary Calhoun:

I am willing to give for that establishment a fine and well-stocked farm, situated in the rich valley of Florissant about one mile from the river Missouri and fifteen from St. Louis.

³ The text of the Concordat is in Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America, Colonial and Federal*, Documents, 1: 1021.

⁴ *Ann. Prop.*, 1: 465.

Seven young clergymen, from twenty-two to twenty-seven years of age, of solid parts, and an excellent classical education, are nearly ready to set off at the first signal under the guidance of two Superiors and professors and with an escort of a few faithful mechanics and husbandmen to commence that foundation. I calculate at about two years the time necessary to consolidate it and to fit out most of those highly promising candidates for the duties of the missions, after which they will be anxious to be sent in different directions according to the views and under the auspices of Government whilst they will be replaced in the Seminary by others destined to continue the noble enterprise.

So forcibly am I struck with the happy consequences likely to result from the extension of that project that I hesitate not to believe that Government viewing it in the same light with myself will be disposed to offer me towards its completion that generous aid without which I would not be warranted to undertake it.

It has already condescended to allow \$800.00 per annum for four missionaries. But it was on the supposition that they would be immediately sent to the Missouri and in the proposed plan the opening of the missions would take place but two years after the commencement of the Seminary. Yet though not actually employed among the tribes, the missionaries, whilst yet in their novitiate would not be the less profitably engaged in the cause; since, besides having a number of young Indians to feed, to educate and maintain, they would be laying the foundation of far more extended usefulness for the future. For the attainment of the object of collecting some Indian boys in the Seminary, it would be of great service, Sir, that you should please invite Gen'l Clark and Col. O'Fallon to lend me their assistance.⁵

To the above communication from Bishop Du Bourg, Secretary Calhoun replied on March 21:

Have received your letter of the 17th inst. and submitted it to the President [Monroe] for his consideration and direction, who has instructed me to inform you in reply that believing the establishment of a school on the principles which you have suggested is much better calculated to effect your benevolent design of extending the benefits of civilization to the remote tribes, and with it, the just influence of the government, than the plan you formerly proposed for the same object, he is willing to encourage it as far as he can with propriety, and will allow you at the former rate of \$800 per annum to be paid quarterly [yearly], towards the support of the contemplated establishment. No advance, however, can be made consistently with the regulations until the establishment has actually commenced its operations, with a suitable number of Indian youths; of which fact and the number of pupils the certificate of General Clark will be the proper evidence.

⁵ Du Bourg to Calhoun March 17, 1823. Indian Office Ms. Records.

A copy of this letter will be sent to General Clark with instructions to give proper orders to such of the Indian agents under his charge, as you may think necessary to facilitate the collection of the Indian youths to be educated and to afford every aid in his power to promote the success of the establishment.

II

Having in this manner originated the plan of an Indian school at Florissant and secured for it a measure of official support, Bishop Du Bourg could very well lay claim to the title which Father Van Quickenborne gave him of "Father of our Indian Seminary."⁶ The school which was thus to owe its origin to the enterprising zeal of the Bishop of Louisiana appears to have been the first institution of its kind conducted under Catholic auspices in the United States. There are on record a few other attempts, apart from Father Van Quickenborne's successful one, to open Catholic Indian schools in the West in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Father Urban Guillet, Superior of the Trappist community settled at Florissant early in the last century, moved his establishment thence to the neighborhood of Cahokia in Illinois in the hope of finding in the latter place the boys he needed for a projected Indian school. Father Donatien Olivier, a conspicuous figure for more than half a century in the mission-stations along the Mississippi, obtained from the chief of the Kaskaskia, at that time still inhabiting their old lands in Southwestern Illinois, a promise of some Indian youths for the Trappist school; but that institution was, in the event, to be conducted as a school for white boys, with only a few Indian boys in attendance.⁷ Some years later the Fathers of the Congregation of the Mission planned an Indian school at their Seminary called the "Barrens," in Perry County, Missouri. "The Jesuits have or will soon have a number of Indian children in their house," Father Odin wrote from the "Barrens" in August, 1823, "and in a few days our Superior is going to meet the Indian Agent to obtain some from him for our Seminary. We shall begin to study their language and to instruct them so as to make catechists out of them or even

⁶*Ann. Prop.*, 4: 583.

⁷*Ann. Prop.*, 1: 390, 392. Cf. *American State Papers, Public Lands*. 2: 106.

priests.”⁸ It does not appear that this plan for the education of Indian youth was ever realized, at least in the way of a regularly organized school. In the summer of 1824, a year later than the date of Father Odin’s letter, Father Nerinckx, the pioneer missionary of Kentucky, died at St. Genevieve on his way from St. Louis to the Loretto Convent of Bethlehem, which was situated near the “Barrens.” He had just arranged with General Clark in St. Louis for the reception at the Loretto convent of a number of Indian girls for whose education the Government had engaged to pay.⁹ The unexpected death of the missionary frustrated the plan and the Indian girls were not sent. A combination of circumstances made it possible for Father Van Quickenborne, carrying out Bishop Du Bourg’s plan, to take up with more success the experiment of Catholic Indian education in the United States.

Father Van Quickenborne was a Belgian by birth, having been borne in Peteghem near Ghent, January 21, 1788. He was at first a diocesan priest, became a Jesuit in 1815, came to America two years later, and was Master of Novices at Whitmarsh in Maryland, whence, at Bishop Du Bourg’s invitation, he led his novices westward in the Spring of 1823 to open at Florissant in Missouri the first house of the restored Society of Jesus in the Mississippi Valley. The names of the young men who with their Superior thus laid the foundations of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus were Judocus Van Assche, Peter John De Smet, Peter John Verhaegen, John Baptist Smedts and Francis De Maillet. In addition to Father Van Quickenborne and his novices the personnel of the pioneer party of 1823 included Father Peter Joseph Timmermans, Assistant Master of Novices, and three lay-brothers, Peter De Meyer, Henry Reisselman and Charles Strahan. All, with the exception of Brother Strahan, an American, and Brother Reisselman, a Hollander, were of Belgian birth. Having established themselves on the Florissant property, where they were to pass through a period of acute privation and distress, the Missouri Jesuits remained

⁸*Ann. Prop.*, 1: 502.

⁹*Ann. Prop.*, 2: 369. MAES, *The Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, p. 528. “Mr. Nerinckx wished to settle down near us and start an Indian college.” Van Assche à De Nef, Sept. 1, 1825.

subject to the jurisdiction of the parent-mission of Maryland until 1831, when they were released from such connection and made directly dependent on the Father General of the Society of Jesus in Rome.¹⁰

Next to the problem of providing for the material wants of his community, a very real and pressing one for many months after the arrival of the Jesuit colony in the West, the problem of setting on foot the Indian school was the one that most engaged Van Quickenborne's mind during his first year at St. Ferdinand's. Scarcely two months after coming West, he wrote to Father John McElroy, a fellow-Jesuit of Frederick, Maryland.

We have not as yet any Indian children. I have seen several Indian chiefs. They have all promised to give their children, but it is an object with which they hardly ever part.¹¹

In the summer of 1823 a deputation of Indians passed through St. Louis on their way to Washington where they were to negotiate for the formation of a confederacy, under government auspices, of six Indian tribes who had planned to exchange their lands east of the Mississippi for lands in the Indian Territory. At the head of the deputation was Colonel Lewis, a Shawnee chief and leading promoter of the proposed confederacy. On advice from General William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, with headquarters in St. Louis, and one of the principals in the memorable Lewis and Clark expedition to the Columbia River, Father Van Quickenborne visited Colonel Lewis, the Shawnee, in St. Louis and laid before him his plans for an Indian school. The chief expressed approval of the plans and promised to send three of his grandchildren to Florissant in the following spring. General Clark urged upon Father Van Quickenborne the opening of the school at as early a date as possible. The latter reported all these circumstances to Father Charles Neale, requesting him, as also Father Benedict Fenwick, to call upon Colonel Lewis when the latter should have arrived in Washington.¹²

¹⁰ The most detailed account of the circumstances that first brought together the group of Jesuits who established themselves in Missouri in 1823 is in MAES, *The Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, pp. 445-464. See also LAVEILLE, *Life of Father De Smet*, and HILL, *History of St. Louis University*.

¹¹ Van Quickenborne to McElroy, July 21, 1823.

¹² Van Quickenborne to Charles Neale, Sept. 23, 1823.

A letter from Father Benedict Fenwick to the Florissant Superior, written in September, 1823, in the name of the Acting Superior of the Maryland Mission, Father Francis Neale, deals among other matters with the question of the Indian school:

On the subject of the education of the young Indians of whom you speak, the Superior requires that you act with the utmost prudence and circumspection in that affair and that you keep yourself altogether within the Concordat. He wishes you to undertake no more than what is specified therein and what the Society has engaged itself for the present to perform. He has no wish to enlarge the sphere of your operation until adequate means be procured either from the Government favoring such a design or from the quarters of which he will give you due notice.

The Superior would have you cultivate in a particular manner the good esteem of the Governor and United States Agents as well civil as military; and whenever they speak to you of the education of the Indian youth to assure them of your willingness to undertake the same; but at the same time to let them know that such a thing will be quite impracticable without the aid of Government. If it should, however, regularly pay you the stipend agreed upon and moreover hold out greater prospects provided you will undertake the education of a larger number of young Indians, it rests with you to weigh the matter and immediately communicate with the Superior and expect his advice on the same. In the meantime let the engagement as far as it goes which the Society has entered into be fully and completely executed. No one can blame you for not doing what the Society has never engaged to do. You have, I presume, a copy of that contract: let that be your Pole-star.¹³

In accordance with the regulations governing such appropriations, the subsidy which the Government had promised to the Indian school at Florissant was not to be paid until the school should have been in actual operation. "Regarding the education of the Indians," Van Quickenborne writes in December, 1823, to Father Francis Neale,

the Bishop has stirred a great sensation in St. Louis about this affair and said everywhere that Government had allowed \$800 as soon as we should have six of them. General Clark told me that the Bishop had assured him Government had made such allowance but that, although he was the one who paid out such pensions, he was not authorized to pay anything to us. Before I received your Reverence's letter I expressed to Gen. or Gov. Clark (he is ordinarily called Gen.) my great desire to have Indian youths, made known to him our circumstances and offered to take

¹³ Benedict Fenwick to Van Quickenborne, Sept. 10, 1823. The Concordat makes no mention of an Indian School.

some (under these circumstances) if he thought proper to do so and he were sure the Government would pay for them. He gave me to understand that it was absolutely necessary that we should begin with some before he could recommend our establishment, and that the government would help us, if they thought proper, only after we had begun. This was a condition *sine qua non*. He (has) the week before last encouraged me to take next Spring two Indian boys of about nine years, which he had offered me five or six weeks ago. To take any without being paid for it is a thing which forbids itself and except we have a numbers of Fathers that are prepared to go out with them after having given them their education, the training of such boys would not be productive of much, perhaps of any good. This is the opinion of General Clark. Before I can say more I must hear what has been done at Washington by Col. Lewis.”¹⁴

Nothing came of Colonel Lewis' plan of an Indian confederacy. Van Quickenborne wrote to his Superior on New Year's day, 1824, for authority to open the Indian school in the following Spring, adding that General Clark was urging that a start be made.¹⁵ At length, in May, 1824, the Father was summoned to St. Louis by the General, who informed him that some Iowa Indians had just made an offer of boys and that he might have them if he wished. Van Quickenborne agreed to take them and word to this effect being sent at once to the Iowa chiefs, who were then visiting the city, they promised to send four or six boys of their tribe to Florissant. Meanwhile, two Sauk boys, one eight and the other six years of age, had been received by the Superior and with these as the first students, the Indian Seminary was formally opened on May 11, 1824, the feast-day of the Jesuit saint, Francis de Hieronymo. The next pupils to be entered at the Seminary were the Iowa youths whom Van Quickenborne had been promised at St. Louis. They started, five in number, from their homes on the left bank of the Missouri River in what is now South-western Iowa, under the protection of a party of chiefs. The

¹⁴Van Quickenborne to Francis Neale, Dec. 12, 1823, Bishop DuBourg appears to have stipulated with the Government for the education of only six boys. He writes July 2, 1824, to Van Quickenborne, "you do not tell me whether Genl. Clark has paid the \$800 at last. I entered into contract for only six Indian boys. I am going to write to the Secretary of War to have you paid as soon as you shall have the six." No reference to such contract has been met with in the correspondence between the Bishop and Secretary Calhoun.

¹⁵Van Quickenborne to Dzierzynski, Jan. 1, 1824. Father Francis Dzierzynski was at this period Superior of the Jesuit Mission of Maryland.

Sauk, for some unknown reason, despatched a deputation from their tribe to dissuade the Iowa chiefs from sending their sons to the new institution. But the Iowa chiefs were not to be turned from their purpose. After some 70 miles of travel, two of the boys fell sick and had to return to the Iowa camp while the three others, with their parents, continued on their way. On June 11, 1824, the candidates, in company with their parents, an interpreter, and Gabriel Vasquez, U. S. agent for the Iowa, appeared at the Seminary. The Indian youths did not submit without protest to what must have seemed to them, accustomed as they were to the freedom of the forest, as nothing short of imprisonment. They began to cry piteously as their elders prepared to depart, whereupon one of the scholastics took up a flute and began to play. The music had the effect of quieting the lads and making them resigned, as far as outward indications went, to their new environment. But Vasquez, the agent, warned Father Van Quickenborne that a sharp eye would have to be kept on the boys, as flight was an easy trick for them. Accordingly, Mr. Smedts, the prefect, rose at intervals during the first night of the Iowas' stay at the Seminary to see that his young charges were all within bounds, while another seminarian was also assigned to sentry duty. But somehow or other the watchers were outwitted. About one o'clock in the morning the Iowa boys made a clever escape. Their flight was soon detected and immediately a party of two were on the track of the fugitives. They were nimble runners, for they were five miles from the Seminary when their pursuers came up to them. They made no resistance to capture and returned, apparently quite content, to the school, though determined, no doubt, to repeat the adventure when opportunity offered, as Father Van Quickenborne intimates in his account of the incident, which he concludes with the comment, *et erit saepe talis repetitio*.¹⁶

III

The Indian school, which Father Van Quickenborne was to designate in his reports to Washington as St. Regis Seminary, was now a reality, so that he felt justified in applying to the Indian Office for the financial aid it had promised through Bishop

¹⁶Van Quickenborne ad Dzierzynski, June 12, 1824.

Du Bourg. On November 21, 1824, he despatched two reports on the condition of the school, one addressed to General Clark and the other to Secretary of War Calhoun. "The Seminary," he wrote to Clark,

went into actual operation the eleventh of May ultimo with two boys of the Sac [Sauk] nation; on the eleventh of June three more were received of the Hyaway [Iowa] nation; thus since that time I have had five boys. The buildings are commodious and can contain from forty to sixty students. They are nearly complete and fifty-four ft. long by seventeen wide one way and thirty-four feet by seventeen feet the other way; three stories high, the lowest of stone, the two others of logs, brick chimnies and galleries all around. They have cost \$1,500.00 and when completed will cost \$2,000.00.¹⁷

To Secretary Calhoun he wrote:

The Seminary is built on a spot of land remarkable for its healthiness and which on account of its being somewhat distant from the Indian tribes and its being sufficiently removed from town is possessed of many advantages. I have persons belonging to the Seminary well calculated to teach the boys the mechanical arts such as are suitable for their condition, as a carpenter, a blacksmith, etc., whose names I do not place on the report, because the boys were not thought fit as yet to begin to learn a trade.

I have the comfort to be able to give my entire approbation to their correct comportment and from the sentiments they utter I have strong hopes that they will become virtuous and industrious citizens warmly attached to the Government that has over them such beneficent designs. I have been prepared these six months past to receive a considerable number more than what I have at present. The number of boys would have amounted to a few more, had not some on account of sickness returned to their village after having done a part of the way."

The letter concludes by asking for the payment of the \$800 promised to Bishop Dubourg "in your letter of March 21, 1822 [1823]."¹⁸

Early in January, 1825, Father Van Quickenborne was still waiting for a response to his petition.

¹⁷ Indian Office Ms. Records. At Father Van Quickenborne's request, General Clark certified to the accuracy of the Superior's report, which according to usage he transmitted to Washington. "This is to certify that the Catholic Missionary Society at Florissant in the State of Missouri have established a school at that place for the education of Indian children and deserve the cooperation of the Government. The progress of the boys has been very rapid and satisfactory. Wm. Clark."

¹⁸ Indian Office Ms. Records.

"It is now two months," he wrote to Bishop Rosati, "since I wrote to the Secretary of War and since General Clark sent him the certificate asked for. I am waiting every day for a favorable answer and I think it better to defer writing to Mr. Richard for a few days more. I fear there is something against us in St. Louis."¹⁹

Meanwhile a Bureau of Indian Affairs had been established in Washington in 1824 as an appanage of the War Department with Col. Thomas Lorraine M'Kenney as its first Commissioner. Colonel M'Kenney's administration of Indian Affairs was able and honest. He had long been interested in the condition of the native tribes of the country and it was chiefly due to his agitation of the matter, as he relates in his *Memoirs*, that Congress was led to make an annual appropriation of \$10,000 for the civilization of the Indian. This was the origin of the so-called Civilization Fund out of which the appropriation for St. Regis Seminary was to come. M'Kenney held the post of Indian Commissioner until he was removed in 1830 by President Jackson, being the first government official, so it has been stated, to fall a victim to the spoils-system inaugurated by that strenuous executive.²⁰

It was accordingly from Colonel M'Kenney that Father Van Quickenborne received an answer in January, 1825, to the letter he had addressed to Calhoun in November of the preceding year.

Your letter to the Secretary of War of the 21st Nov. last in the form of a report of the condition of the Indian Seminary at Florissant has been received. I am directed by the Secretary to state that the number of children in the Seminary being only five, he cannot advance the sum of \$800 as promised in his letter to the Bishop Du Bourg of 21st March, 1822, that letter having stipulated to pay \$800 on the following conditions:

1st, after the establishment should be in operation, and 2nd, with a suitable number of Indian youths.

The Secretary, however, directs that the most that has ever been allowed for the purpose be allowed to you, which is one hundred dollars for each youth, which will be increased at that rate 'til you shall have received eight, when the increase of appropriations will have reached its limits. A

¹⁹Van Quickenborne à Rosati, Jan. 1825, Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. The Mr. Richard mentioned in Father Van Quickenborne's letter was the Rev. Gabriel Richard of Detroit, U.S. Congressman from Michigan Territory during the years 1823-1825. He was the first and only Catholic priest that ever held such office.

²⁰M'KENNEY, *Memoirs Official and Personal*, New York, 1846, p. 35.

remittance of five hundred dollars has been made to Gen'l Clark to be paid to you in conformity with the above decision, and all future remittances on account of the allowance made to the school of which you have charge will be made through Gen'l Clark, unless you should wish them to be made differently.²¹

The Government had thus, though not without some delay, discharged in all essential respects the obligations it had assumed towards the Indian school in the negotiations between the Bishop of Louisiana and Secretary Calhoun. There appears to be no evidence that the Government was really disposed not to stand by its engagements, though its delay in forwarding the first appropriation, or some other circumstance, seems to have excited some such suspicion in the minds of Bishop Du Bourg and Father Van Quickenborne. The Bishop wrote to Van Quickenborne in January, 1825, while the expected appropriation seemed to be hanging in the balance:

I am astonished at what you told me of the Government's breach of promise. Why do you not protest at Washington through one of your Fathers? I wrote lately to Col. Benton, Senator of Missouri, requesting him to see the Secretary of War and remind him of his obligations. It would be well for you to forward to Father Dzierozynski copies of the Secretary's letters which I sent you, with the request that he show them to the Secretary, together with a certificate from the Governor of your State to the effect that you have complied with the conditions of the contract. I cannot believe that the Government is aware of the violation of its pledge. The matter should be attended to as soon as possible. If, which is an impossibility, the Government should turn a deaf ear to your demands, the whole affair should be brought to the notice of the public. Such a breach of faith would compromise any Government. I will myself write to Mr. Calhoun in the plainest terms.²²

The \$500 which Calhoun directed to be paid to Father Van Quickenborne at St. Louis was the first money ever appropriated by the United States Government to a Catholic Indian School. As the number of boys at the St. Regis had increased beyond eight, the appropriation in its favor for the years 1825 and 1826 was presumably \$800.²³ In 1827, however, the appropriation

²¹ M'Kenney to Van Quickenborne, Jan. 28, 1825.

²² Du Bourg to Van Quickenborne, Jan. 18, 1825.

²³ "You tell me that the number of your Indian boys is increasing. If this be so the Government allowance ought to increase in proportion up to \$800. Do not fail to protest in this matter." Du Bourg to Van Quickenborne, May 25, 1825.

was cut down to \$400, extra demands on the funds of the Indian Office, so it was alleged, making larger allowance impossible, and it remained at this figure until 1830 when the payments ceased altogether.²⁴ The total amount of money paid by the Government to the Florissant school during its brief career of six or seven years was about \$3,500.²⁵

Now that Father Van Quickenborne had secured from Government the promised subsidy for his educational venture, he was anxious to secure aid from the same quarter towards defraying the expenses of the school-house he had erected on the seminary grounds. The cost of this building, as noted in his report to General Clark of November 21, 1824, was about \$1,500 or \$2,000 when the building should be completed. Van Quickenborne's application for aid in this connection was refused on grounds set forth in a communication from Colonel M'Kenney:

Your letter of the 23 ult. to the Secretary of War, requesting to have the plan of the buildings at Florissant approved and payment to be made according to the regulations of the 20th Feb., 1820, has been received. I have the honor by direction of the Secretary to state, in reply, that the allowance from the Civilization fund, towards the erection of buildings for Indian schools, is considered applicable (as stated in the regulations of the 30 Sept., 1819, of which those of the 20th Feb., 1820 are additional) to such establishments only as may be fixed within the limits of those Indian nations that border our settlements. The buildings at Florissant not being within such limits, but upon your own land, are not provided for in the regulations aforesaid.²⁶

It was clear to Father Van Quickenborne that his efforts in behalf of Indian boys would be largely wasted unless on growing up they could secure Catholic wives with whom to persevere in the practice of their religion. A school for girls was therefore an essential factor in his scheme of Indian education and in his efforts to establish one he took counsel with Madame Duchesne. That truly apostolic woman, it is unnecessary to say, was watching with the liveliest interest the educational experiment to which her spiritual director had put his hand. She took a direct and

²⁴ M'Kenney to Van Quickenborne, February 9, 1827. Expenses of school for past year [1828] \$1,600. Government pays only \$400. *Ann. Prop.*, 4: 584.

²⁵ Father Van Quickenborne in a report gives the amount as \$3,300 or \$3,500.

²⁶ M'Kenney to Van Quickenborne, April 28, 1825.

maternal interest in the Indian boys, washing their linen and lending her personal services more than once to keep them neat and tidy. The idea of a school for Indian girls to be conducted by her community appealed to her intensely apostolic spirit. Accordingly, in June, 1824, a month after the opening of the boys' school, she wrote to the Mother General, Sophie Barat, asking permission to open a similar institution for girls.

"The board costs little," she explained to her; "lodging is already available and as for clothes, we shall beg them. We must omit nothing to further this interesting work, the object of so many desires, the very thing that has brought us here."²⁷

Five weeks later she wrote again:

I sometimes think that God has spoiled our first plans and our first undertaking, the boarding-school I mean, in order to build up little by little the more fascinating work of the education of the Indians. We must merit it by humiliations and other sufferings.²⁸

In the beginning of April, 1825, the ambition of Madame Duchesne was finally realized. "One evening during Office," Madame Mathevan records in her *Journal*, "Father Rector called at the Convent and asked to see the Superior. Picture the surprise of Madame Duchesne on seeing two little Indian girls before her, who, greatly embarrassed, were trying to hide themselves behind the Father's flowing mantle. He had brought them up in a cart."²⁹

On all things in and about the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Florissant poverty was writ large. It had now to carry an additional burden of expense in the Indian school, a burden heavier than Madame Duchesne had anticipated. The cost of maintenance for the first year amounted to \$590, doubtless a heavy drain on the slender resources of the nuns. "For the expenses incurred by them," Van Quickenborne wrote in December, 1825, "I have offered and given them: (1) corn for the whole year; (2) potatoes for the whole year; (3) fire-wood for the whole year.

²⁷ BAUNARD, *Life of Mother Duchesne*, p. 264.

²⁸ BAUNARD, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

²⁹ BAUNARD, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

I doubt whether they will receive these things gratis. They help us much in making and repairing clothes for us and the Indians.”³⁰

There was no reason, however, why aid should not be lent to the Madame’s Indian school by the Government, which was subsidizing similar institutions in charge of non-Catholic denominations and was a real, if indirect, beneficiary in the devoted labors of the nuns. Accordingly, Van Quickenborne, with the warm approval of General Clark, though the latter expressed a desire that his name be not mentioned in connection with the affair, determined to apply to Washington for an appropriation for the girls’ school. His petition, dispatched in June, 1825, under the auspices, so he is at pains to note, of St. Francis Regis, was addressed to Secretary of War Eaton, and represented that an annual subsidy of \$800 would enable the directors of the Female Indian School at Florissant to continue the praiseworthy enterprise on which they had embarked.³¹ The petition was denied, presumably on the ground of lack of funds to cover the appropriation asked for, and so Madame Duchesne’s Indian School was destined to run its brief career without government support of any kind. It closed its doors at about the same time that the neighboring school for boys came to an end.

As the only Catholic Indian school in the United States, St. Regis Seminary and its pioneer labors were brought by Father Van Quickenborne to the attention of Catholic France in the pages of the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*. Mention of the school is also to be found in an appeal made in 1826 to the generosity of European Catholics by Father Gabriel Richard of Detroit, at that time a member of the National House of Representatives.

³⁰Van Quickenborne to Dzierzynski, Dec. 19, 1825. “As the school for girls has been opened only this year, the beginning of it has necessarily been attended with greater expenses than will be required next year for an equal number. Both boys and girls behave with great propriety. The strict morality which they observe in their conduct, their submission and obedience to the orders of their Superiors, their entire satisfaction and contentedness in their new state of life and finally their gratitude to their benefactors give the strongest hopes that they will be useful citizens and be sincerely attached to Government that has in their regard such benevolent views.”

³¹Van Quickenborne ad Dzierzynski, June, 1825.

At Mackinac last summer the Presbyterians put up a school-house about a hundred feet in length. In this school they have received a large number of Indian children, whom they feed, clothe and instruct gratis. The Catholics of America are in general poor and unable even to build churches for their own needs. . . . It is then to the generosity of the Catholics of Europe that we must look for effective aid. The ministers of error are quick to profit by the ample means placed at their disposal by their rich merchants who subscribe liberally for all their institutions. Moreover, as they were on the ground before us, they make off annually with nearly all of the ten thousand dollars which the President of the United States is authorized to spend on the civilization of the Indians. There is so far only one Catholic school for the instruction of Indian children, that namely at Florissant, near St. Louis; this establishment receives a subsidy from the Government and this owing to the clever tact and engaging address of the Bishop of New Orleans, Mgr. Du Bourg. . . . The Jesuits of France, England and Italy should come here and take possession of their old missions, the ruins of which cry out for them on all sides. . . . What would I not do to make my voice heard over all Europe! I would speak to it of the poor Indian in these terms: "*Parvuli petierunt panem et non erat qui frangeret eis.*"³²

IV

We have seen that the affairs of the Indian school brought Father Van Quickenborne into frequent personal contact with Gen. William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis. This historic character, whose success in dealing with the Indians make him a conspicuous figure in the early history of the West, frequently discussed with the Jesuit missionary the deplorable condition of the savage tribes and the best methods of affording them relief. His own plan for the systematic civilization of the Indian nations, as outlined by Father Van Quickenborne in a letter to the Maryland Superior, was simple enough. A tract of land, presumably west of the Missouri state-line in the present state of Kansas (though Van Quickenborne says it was only 200 miles distant from Florissant) was to be set aside for the Indian tribes. The tract was to be divided into districts and in each district four or five tribes were to be allowed to settle down. A school-house with resident missionary was to be provided for each district, while outside the limits of the entire

³² *Ann. Prop.*, 3: 333.

region there was to be a sort of central Indian school to which about six boys and as many girls from each district were to be sent. St. Regis Seminary, with a department for girls to be conducted by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, was considered as likely to answer all the requirements of this central school. "But," Clark observed to Van Quickenborne, "if I put a Methodist in one district, a Presbyterian in another, a Quaker in a third, and a Catholic in fourth, you will be constantly at war, and instead of giving them peace will only create confusion in the minds of the Indians. I should like to give the districts to one Society and I think that yours is more competent for the work than any of the others." Father Van Quickenborne replied to Clark that he thought his Order had men sufficient for the districts. To the eagerly apostolic Superior, Clark's scheme appeared a dispensation of Providence for renewing the missionary glories of the ancient Jesuits. "Who does not see here," he writes with enthusiasm to Dzierzynski, "the beginning of another Paraguay. It would indeed be a miracle if the other missionaries were displaced and ours substituted in their stead. But this is the age of miracles. Oh, if our Very Rev. Fr. General were to send us a Xavier, a Lallemand, a John Francis [Regis] and you, Father, four or five well-formed brothers. *Sed quid ego miser.*"³³

Some months later Clark returned to the subject of Catholic missionaries. He informed Van Quickenborne that the Catholics were not asking for missionary posts, and that these were now nearly all assigned, the Methodists having been particularly insistent in their demands.³⁴ Finally, in the fall of 1825, he invited the Father to visit the Kansas Indians and promised to pay for the boys he would obtain from that tribe. The land held by the Kansas Indians within the limits of Missouri had been ceded to the United States Government in 1825. One township was reserved to be sold for \$20,000 dollars, and this sum was to constitute an education fund to be applied by the President of the United States to the maintenance of a school in the Kansas Village. At 5 per cent the capital would yield an annual income

³³ Van Quickenborne ad Dzierzynski, April 29, 1825.

³⁴ Van Quickenborne ad Dzierzynski, June 30, 1825. "Wishing to stir me to action, he [Clark] deprecated politely the fact that Catholics do not sufficiently exert themselves to obtain those places."

of \$1,000. Clark urged Van Quickenborne to apply for the Kansas school with the accompanying appropriation. The treaty, so the General informed him, awaited confirmation by the Senate, but that obtained, immediate application for the new school would be made by some Protestant denomination. Van Quickenborne wrote to his Superior reporting this offer made by General Clark and suggesting that the affair could be negotiated in Washington by Father Dzierozynski himself, or by Father Dubuisson or by Father Matthews of St. Patrick's Church. Nothing, however, came of this attempt of the superintendent to engage Jesuit missionaries for the Kansas Indians.³⁵

In the course of the year 1825, Father Van Quickenborne, at General Clark's solicitation, drew up and submitted a plan for a general and systematic civilization of the Indian tribes. "The Superintendent of Indian Affairs," the Father wrote to Bishop Du Bourg, "has had me put in writing my ideas on the best way of civilizing the Indians. He previously laid before me his own plans as well as his good intentions in our regard. It is only two days since he broached the subject and I have not found time to perfect my plan. I send it to you, however, such as I have been able to make it in so short a time, hoping that your Lordship will make whatever changes you may deem advisable."³⁶ The plan was as follows:

1. Our little Indian Seminary should continue to support the present number of boys from eight to twelve years of age, while the Ladies of the Sacred Heart in our neighborhood should bring up about as many girls of the same tribe. They should be taken young, from eight to twelve, to habituate them more easily to the customs and industry of civil life, and impress more deeply on their hearts the principles of religion.

2. After five or six years education, it would be good that each youth should choose a wife among the pupils of the Sacred Heart, before returning to his tribe.

3. Within two or three years two missionaries should go to reside in that nation to gain their confidence and esteem, and gradually persuade a number to settle together on a tract to be set apart by Government. Agricultural implements and other necessary tools for the new establishment to be furnished.

³⁵ Van Quickenborne to Dzierozynski, December 19, 1825.

³⁶ *Ann. Prop.*, 2: 396.

4. As soon as this new town was formed, some of the couples formed in our establishments should be sent there with one of the said missionaries, who should be immediately replaced, so that two should always be left with the body of the tribe, till it was gradually absorbed in the civilized colony.

5. Our missionaries should then pass to another tribe and proceed successively with each in the same manner as the first.

6. As the number of missionaries and our resources increased, the civilization of two or more tribes might be undertaken at once. The expense of carrying out this plan might be estimated thus:

The support of 16 to 24 children in two establishments.	\$1,900
Three Missionaries	600

Total	\$2,500. ³⁷
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Van Quickenborne's plan, ingenious and promising as it appeared to be, was never executed. General Clark promised to lay it before Secretary of War Calhoun on the occasion of a visit he was to pay to Washington, but omitted doing so since the Secretary, who was soon to relinquish his office, was unwilling to discuss measures the execution of which would devolve upon his successor.³⁸

Four years later, in the spring of 1829, Father Van Quickenborne called on President Jackson in Washington and laid before him substantially the same plan for the civilization of the Indians as that outlined above. The President gave his verbal approval. The plan is sketched in a letter which Van Quickenborne addressed to Secretary of War, Eaton, in October, 1829.

In the latter part of last Spring, I had the honor of proposing to our venerable President, General Jackson, the plan for the civilization of the Indians, which I now take the liberty of laying before your excellency. Should Government approve of it, I would buy in this state six or seven thousand acres of land. The Indian boys and girls educated in our institution, after being married would go thither to settle upon a tract of 25 acres, which I would give to each of them in fee simple, with some restrictions. However, all of them could make application as foreigners do for citizenship. I would be inclined to receive into our Seminary only such youths, as declare through their parents, their willingness and desire to become citizens of the United States, and living according to the

³⁷*Ann. Prop.*, 2:397. The translation is from Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States*, p. 406.

³⁸Van Quickenborne to Dzierzozynski, January 10, 1825.

laws of the country. Upon making such declaration such grown Indians as would be willing to be married according to our laws and begin immediately a farm would also be received. The new settlers would adopt the English language. Two Reverend gentlemen of our Society would reside among them, be their pastor and officiate in the church to be built. If any assistance should be given by Government, it would be most gratefully received. The President has verbally approved the plan.³⁹

The Government's decision in regard to Father Van Quickenborne's plan was communicated to him by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Colonel M'Kenney:

Your views in relation to the Indians, and especially the Indian children educated at your school, are considered highly commendable, and it is very gratifying to find that you are disposed to engage so earnestly in the cause of Indian improvement. Your plan, as far as it goes, is considered good; but as the subject will be taken up by the Executive and a general plan for the civilization and improvement of the Indians submitted to Congress at the next session, it is not deemed advisable, in the meantime, to extend the aid of the Government to any partial plan for the same object.⁴⁰

V

The records of the period afford us only occasional glimpses of what went on within the humble inclosure of the Indian school at Florissant. Father Van Quickenborne, always an optimist when the affairs of the school were in question, wrote with keen satisfaction to Dzierozynski, within a few months after the institution had opened its doors, of the change that had come over the Indian boys:

Plays are preparing for the Indian boys. These go on to the astonishment of us all. In the beginning we had to watch them like wild hares; they were weeping the whole day. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart have a forty days devotion to St. John Francis Regis. I have made a vow, if the boys changed, to do what I could to have that Saint for the patron of our mission. The boys are entirely changed. They observe order like a well-regulated college boy or like a novice; they already know their prayers. Mr. Smedts, their prefect, understands them. We have had an interpreter for fourteen days. They make regularly their visits to the

³⁹ Van Quickenborne to Eaton, October 4, 1829. Indian Office Ms. Records. Van Quickenborne's plan is also sketched in a letter in the *Ann. Prop.*, 4: 587.

⁴⁰ M'Kenney to Van Quickenborne, October 27, 1829.

Blessed Sacrament and behave to the great edification of us all. They work two hours before dinner and two after dinner with the greatest satisfaction. They all wept when the hoe was put into their hand for the first time.⁴¹

Father Van Quickenborne's satisfaction with his Indian pupils was further increased by an incident that took place during the first year of the school's career.

We received a visit here from chiefs and twelve warriors of the Hya-way [Iowa] nation. The boys appeared at St. Louis before these visitors while they had their talk with General Clark. They were well dressed and behaved extremely well. On entering the city one of them drove the cart in which the others were, which amazed the Indian fathers exceedingly. They were highly satisfied and General Clarke, I have been told, said, after the talk was over, to an agent: "I wish all the Indian boys were with Catholics."⁴²

To live the greater part of the day with a class of Indian boys and at the same time continue to snatch some moments of time for the theological studies preparatory to ordination, was an obviously uncomfortable manner of existence. Mr. Smedts, the first of the scholastics to be appointed prefect of the Indian pupils, had been succeeded in that capacity by Mr. Verreydt, who thus laid open to Father Dzierozynski the difficulty of his position:

The boys rise in the morning during meditation and I am with them till half-past eight o'clock when they go to the field and return a quarter before twelve, at which time I am with them till two o'clock (after dinner) when they go again to the field till a quarter before five. At this time I used to teach some to spell till half-past six; but since eight boys have left us so that we have at present but seven Indian boys and three French boys, our Reverend Superior has allowed me to employ this time in the study of moral divinity, the study of which I resumed since last Easter. On Sundays and Holydays I have to be with them the whole day; when it rains I have to be with them. They must be watched at night. I often sleep in the day in order to watch at night.⁴³

The one idea that had to be brought home to the Indian boys with persistent pains was that work is honorable. The conven-

⁴¹Van Quickenborne to Dzierozynski, 1824.

⁴²Van Quickenborne to Dzierozynski, Jan. 10, 1825.

⁴³Verreydt to Dzierozynski, 1826.

tional picture of the American Indian in his native habitat which represents him as idling comfortably in the sun at his wigwam door while his squaw is busy with formidable tasks of manual labor does no violence to the facts. On an occasion when a band of some thirty Indians paid a visit to Florissant, one of their number was amazed to see his son, a pupil of the Seminary, carrying a bucket of water. All the pride of race rose within him and he asked the boy indignantly, "Are you a slave?"—the Indian's epithet for all who labor with their hands. To overcome the prejudice of the boys against work it became necessary for the directors of the school to set an example in their own persons of manual labor. With this end in view, as for other reasons also, one of the community, either a lay-brother or a scholastic, worked alongside the boys in the fields. At intervals, as in the potato and corn-planting season, the entire scholastic body would join them in their work. Moreover, the scholastics spent nearly the whole of the vacation period in labor of various kinds, as in making cider or felling trees for tables. "All this is necessary," Mr. Van Assche, one of their number, observes to a correspondent, "to encourage the Indians." Efforts were also made to teach the youths to sing and even to play on musical instruments, not without some success. But on the whole their voices were found to lack the clearness requisite for singing, though an Indian boy would occasionally delight the worshippers at St. Ferdinand's church with a voice of unusual sweetness.⁴⁴

To provide suitable board and especially clothing for the children was sometimes a serious problem.

To increase the number of Indians and Jesuits as well [Mr. Van Assche wrote in 1825 to his benefactor M. De Nef of Turnhout in Belgium], it is highly important for us to try to improve our farm. We have written to our parents and friends for clothing, as without such assistance, it is quite impossible for us to receive many pupils. To feed sixteen or twenty is not such a great matter, but to clothe them is out of the question, for shoes, hats and linen are very expensive. Those who are coming to join us will perform a great act of charity by bringing along with them as large a supply as possible of linen and other kinds of cloth, no matter of what color, provided of course it is worth the cost of transportation. If they bring pantaloons, cloaks, or other articles of wear ready made, they

⁴⁴ Van Assche to De Nef, May, 1827.

must know that the youngest of the twelve is only five and the oldest fourteen years old. Most of the clothes on them now were brought by us from Europe.⁴⁵

What happened when the Indian parents visited their sons at the Seminary is told naively by the lay-brother, Peter De Meyer.

We opened a school for Indian and half-Indian boys. They were taught to wear clothes, to eat with knives and forks, to say their prayers in English and to work in the fields. I worked several summers with them in the corn fields and chopped fire-wood with them during winter in the woods. Once their fathers and their attendants, for they were chiefs of different tribes, came to see them on their way to Washington to transact business with the President of the United States for their nation. On their arrival towards night we made great preparation to receive them well. We killed a large ox by candle-light in the orchard and were going to lay a table with knives, forks, etc. But their interpreter, who was a Frenchman and knew their language well, said, "Not so; give them a large pot and meat and let them cook for themselves in the woods." So a large kettle was taken out the wash-house and a quarter of the ox was given to them and they then retired into the woods about thirty yards from the house. The boys put a piece of blanket on their backs which was the uniform of the nobles of their nation. They made a big fire, cooked and eat their bellyful. They also took some snaps which they carried with them in long canes. Then they began to dance around the fire, singing their war-songs. These lasted till a very late hour. Some of ours feared they were about to do some mischief; but it was all fun. They at last lay down and slept till morning; when they got up, they began to eat again, for their kettle was not yet empty. Shortly after, they started off.⁴⁶

For a while Father Van Quickenborne's Indian school seemed destined to a prolonged and useful career. From the Indian Office came approval and appreciation of its work.⁴⁷ But more

⁴⁵ Van Assche to De Nef, 1825. The generosity of benefactors appears to have solved later on the problems of clothing the Indian boys. "For their support we have and will receive from the charity of the faithful whatever is necessary. Last week we received from Europe 95 shirts, 135 handkerchiefs, 2 soutanes, 1 cloak, 2 surtouts, 35 pairs boots and a number of stockings and flannel jackets, all in very good order." Van Quickenborne to Dzierozynski, September 1, 1828.

⁴⁶ *Reminiscences of Peter De Meyer*, S. J., 1867 [Ms.].

⁴⁷ "Your letter to the Secretary of War of the 4th ultimo, enclosing your report of the state of the Indian school under your Superintendency is received. I am directed to acknowledge it, and to convey to you the Secretary's approval; and the expression of his hopes that your benevolent labors for the enlightening of a portion of our Indians may be more and more prosperous." M'Kenney to Van Quickenborne, November 3, 1826.

acceptable to the zealous Van Quickenborne, no doubt, than any note of secular approval was the commendatory statement made by his Superior, Father Dzierozynski, on the occasion of the latter's visit to Florissant in the summer of 1827.

The Indian school has one teacher, a lay-brother. Thanks be to God, it makes excellent progress alike in morals, letters and manual labor in the fields, where every day, both morning and afternoon, the boys spend some hours with their instructors. The boys number only thirteen, but the house cannot accommodate any more. There is a similar school for Indian girls in the village of St. Ferdinand, a famous old Spanish settlement. This is in charge of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. The pupils number as many as in the boys' school, their education being looked to by the Ladies, their support by the Rector of the Florissant establishment, who by dint of alms and the produce of his farm endeavors to the best of his ability to supply them with food and clothing, however poor these may be. I was highly pleased to hear the Indian girls recite their catechism. Who made you? Who redeemed you? Who sanctified you? To all such questions they replied with childlike simplicity. A more elaborate exhibition was given by ours at Florissant. St. Ignatius day was celebrated with a Solemn High Mass and panegyric in St. Ferdinand's church, some of the Indian boys singing with Ours in the choir. After dinner in a sort of rustic amphitheatre festooned with flowers and greenery the Indian boys underwent an examination in their studies, the best of them being awarded prizes. After the specimen, one of their number, of more than usual capacity and diligence, came to my room very quietly so as not to be seen by the others and asked me to take him along with me to Georgetown College. "If I remain here I shall go to the bad." I encouraged him with the assurance that grace to preserve his innocence would not fail him in Missouri. He took me at my word and went away satisfied.⁴⁸

VI

In the event, St. Regis Seminary failed to realize its early promise. It does not appear that Father Van Quickenborne's management of the school commended itself at all times to his associates in the educational venture, though never was there reason to doubt that he was guided by other motive than zeal for the best interests of the institution. "It is clear to me now," wrote in later years one who did not see eye to eye with him in the affairs of the school, "that he always acted as he thought best

⁴⁸*Historia Missionis Missourianae* [Ms.].

under the circumstances and always had before his eyes *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*.”⁴⁹ As to his management of the school, the opinion was expressed that he was unduly severe in his treatment of some of the boys and that the hours of work were too many and the hours of study too few. Yet there is much to show that a very substantial tenderness of heart underlay whatever severity showed itself in the outward manner of this sturdy Fleming. The man charged with too drastic treatment of his Indian pupils could thus plead with them with his Superior in Maryland when, apparently against his own judgment and wishes, he was required to expel some of their number from the school.

The boys expelled by me are not discouraged. All are highly praised. I say only what was said to me. One made his first Communion under Father De Theux and goes to the Sacraments every month and was first in Catechism. Maximus, son of the Ioway chief, is in St. Charles and is spoken of highly by Father Smedts. The third is in Portage and works hard and behaves himself. The two others are so small that they can scarcely do anything. When I met one of them scarcely six years old and saw him, whom I had received as a son, now being treated as a little slave by his new master, my feelings got the better of me and I almost fainted. I think that your Reverence with a knowledge of the circumstances would not have given the orders you did, and I ask you that we may be permitted to deal more gently with these little things whom we have only yesterday rescued from the wild beasts of the forest. However, I am prepared to obey the orders of Rev. Father Superior.⁵⁰

The last report forwarded to Washington by Father Van Quickenborne, that for the year ending September 30, 1830, stated that in December, 1830, there were only two pupils attending the school.⁵¹ In May, 1832, Elbert Herring, who had succeeded Colonel M'Kenney as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote to Father Van Quickenborne asking, "Is the Department to infer from your having ceased to draw from the sum allowed or to transmit the required report, that you no longer claim any aid from the Government?"

The Superior's reply, dated July 10, brought a second letter from Mr. Herring.

⁴⁹ Elet ad Dzierzynski, May 20, 1835.

⁵⁰ Van Quickenborne to Dzierzynski, 1825.

⁵¹ Indian Office Ms. Records.

"The Department," he said, "cannot with any propriety continue to bestow a part of the Public Funds entrusted to it in aid of an Institution which the principal himself represents to have had hardly an existence for more than two years. It cannot, therefore, permit you to expect that your request that the allowance for the past year and the current one will be paid. If you should succeed in reëstablishing the school, your communication of the fact will meet with prompt attention and you will receive such assistance as the circumstances seem to demand."⁵²

With this communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs the business relations between St. Regis Seminary and the United States Government came to an end. The last Indian boy left June 30, 1831, and the institution passed into history.⁵³ That it was a model Indian school no one conversant with the facts will venture to maintain. Too remote a location from the Indian villages, probably certain mistakes in the management of the school, but especially lack of proper financial support, were among the reasons for the failure of the institution to realize a larger measure of success. Yet we are not to conclude that the labors of the men who through six years maintained against discouraging odds the first Catholic Indian School in the United States had gone for nothing. The author of the *Annual Letters* of the Missouri Mission for 1830 notes that many former pupils of the Seminary were living among the whites and continued to

⁵² Herring to Van Quickenborne, May 30, 1832.

⁵³ The boys in attendance were not for the most part of pure Indian stock. Their number, which during the entire life of the school did not go beyond thirty in all, included ten full-blooded Indians of five different tribes, Osage chiefly, and twenty metifs or half-breeds. Almost one-half of the half-breeds were illegitimate. All the full blooded Indians, with the exception of two who were dismissed for breaches of morality, were taken away by their parents. [Contemporary Ms. memorandum.] Father Van Quickenborne was disappointed both in the number and quality of Indian boys furnished him by the Indian agents and, with a view largely to obtain suitable pupils for his school, made personal visits to the Osage in their villages along the Neosho river. "This visit [of the Iowa chiefs] and other circumstances have made me see much better than before how little we can rely on Indians or on the efforts of Indian Agents in behalf of our Seminary. You must remember what the Secretary of War said to Bishop Du Bourg, viz: that he wanted Jesuits. Now, Rev. Father Superior, we must go out and make a choice of Indian boys. Let the Indians know us. Agents have told me this and General Clark is dubious of the success of the undertaking unless we do it." Van Quickenborne to Dzierozynski, January 10, 1825. A highly interesting account of Van Quickenborne's bringing a little Indian "prince" from the Osage country to Florissant in 1828, is given by him in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 4: 578.

receive the sacraments monthly. Around one of them in particular hung something of the odor of sanctity and the holy end he made as a mere boy was the admiration of all who witnessed it.⁵⁴ Sometimes, too, Jesuit missionaries of later years would find a foothold for some missionary enterprise in the sympathy and good will of one-time pupils of the Florissant Indian School. Thus, when Fathers De Smet and Verreydt ascended the Missouri in 1838 to open the Potawatomi Mission at Council Bluffs, they were welcomed at a stopping place on the way by Francis, the Iowa chief, whom Father De Smet had instructed at St. Regis Seminary and who would gladly have kept his former teacher to minister to his people.⁵⁵

As to Father Van Quickenborne, he rested from his labors at the comparatively early age of forty-nine, dying at Portage des Sioux in Missouri, August 17, 1837. He did not live to see the day, brighter than his own, when his associates of the Jesuit Mission of Missouri were enabled to set on foot the two highly successful Indian schools which they maintained through many years on behalf of the Potawatomi and Osage tribes; but he blazed the way in the field of Catholic Indian education in the United States and the praise of the pioneer and pathfinder is his. For the rest, the tribute of the historian, John Gilmary Shea, may here find a place:

To Father Van Quickenborne, as the founder of the Vice-Province of Missouri and the Indian Missions, too little honor has been paid. His name is almost unknown, yet few have contributed more to the education of the white and the civilization of the red man, to the sanctification of all.⁵⁶

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⁵⁴*Litterae Annuae Missionis Missourianae*, 1823-1834, p. 24 [Ms.].

⁵⁵ Chittenden and Richardson's *De Smet*, 1: 152. Two sons of Pahuska or White Hair, head Osage chief, their names Clèremont and Grètomonsé, the latter head chief of the tribe in 1852, were pupils at St. Regis, where they were baptized. *Osage Mission Register* (Archives of Passionist Monastery, St. Paul, Kansas).

⁵⁶ Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions, etc.*, p. 466.